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**MX**

Welcome back...

FIM MX1 World Champion Tony Cairoli pummelled the dirt for the first time since the Motocross of Nations two weeks ago after recovering from his wrist fracture. The Sicilian, who will be testing 350 and 450cc motorcycles with an eye on a fourth consecutive title in 2012, will now be splitting his training time between bases in Patti, Rome and Lommel.

Photo by Stefano Taglioni







MotoGP

1000 reasons to be happy

MotoGP World Champion Casey Stoner rounds the Ricardo Tormo circuit in Valencia in the first official tests ahead of the 2012 season. The Australian proved that Honda are on the mark from the 'go' with their RC213V as both the number one and team-mate Dani Pedrosa topped the time sheets. The MotoGP pack will reconvene with their new CRT guests at Sepang in Malaysia at the end of January; perhaps enough time for Ducati and Yamaha to play catch up?

Photo by Andrew Northcott/Honda Pro Images







OTOR

A few miles in the saddle...

A little deviation from the norm in OTOR but the next major race to capture the international spotlight will be the 34th Dakar rally in South America on New Year's Day. KTM will be chasing an eleventh consecutive win over the 9000km-two week route and second since the motorcycle class embraced a 450cc capacity. Pictured here is triumphant Catalan and defending Champ Marc Coma, victor of three of the last five editions

Photo by Jonty Edmunds







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HARDCASE: HOW CAL CRUTCHLOW IS TRYING TO CONQUER MotoGP...

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Monster Energy Europe/Milagro

I first met Cal Crutchlow in the hospitality of Alpinestars at the 2009 MotoGP round in Valencia. The newly crowned World Supersport Champion was clutching a poster that he'd had signed by Valentino Rossi and seemed only too keen to chat about a feature I was writing on motocross and MotoGP.

The 26 year old was bouncing around like an eager fan and clearly enjoying the environment and I wonder how much he believed at that stage of his career (before an explosive term in WSB in 2010) that he'd soon be Britain's sole representative in the premier class at the highest level.

Two years on and I'm again in Valencia and happy to find that despite his travails that have included some ups and downs (decent

speed, broken collarbones) throughout a maiden MotoGP term Crutchlow is still affable, forthright and happy to chew the fat. In fact later when I'm having a coffee with Monster Energy Europe's communications manager Jimmy Goodrich he comes over and we spend a decent amount of time talking about his residence on the Isle of Man and other things 'bike'. Crutchlow should be touched by fame, thanks to his position at the top of British motorcycle racing's stunted ladder, but he certainly doesn't act that way.

For our interview there is certainly a few things to ruminate, the shadow of Marco Simoncelli's death less than a fortnight before hangs over the meeting and Crutchlow's role as one of two MotoGP rookies in 2011 means his insight is particularly worthy...





“The differences between the factory bikes and the non-factory bikes have gotten bigger”

What's your evaluation of this first stab at MotoGP?

Tough! At the start of the year we were going better than what we were at the end but I have a lot of reasons for that and some people won't like those reasons. Basically the differences between the factory bikes and the non-factory bikes have gotten bigger. We've had no updates all year. Colin [Edwards] and I have been doing more or less the same lap-times as the factory two were making last year, on their old machines. We can't do anything else. I think it is creditable enough in its own right. Jorge won the title last year and we are doing consistently similar times as to what he was doing then.

Honda and Casey Stoner have gone that fast that the rest of the field really had to pick up. Lorenzo is finding time by himself; he was taking more risks and having to ride so much harder than the others to be in a position to be able to fight for wins.

We went to Indianapolis and my overall race time finishing eleventh would have put my fourth or something like that the year before, and I'd never been to the circuit! It was one of ten I had to learn this season. I still don't feel comfortable on the bike and honestly I'll be glad to get on the 1000 and hopefully it will suit me a bit more.

2011 went more or less how I thought it would be. We showed really good pace and raw speed at certain times but the consistency wasn't there and that's what I expected. If we can turn some of that speed into consistency next year there is no reason why we can't be up there. I'll be learning all over again because of the 1000s but I'm up for the challenge.

It seems British riders don't get much time to really establish themselves...if you look at the likes of Walker, Ellison, Toseland etc...

I think we can say that Brits don't get the chance...because I think there are riders in this championship that don't deserve to be here and they still are because they have their name 'painted' here. If one Brit would stay here then it would be a helluva lot easier because you build progression. There are not enough Brits brought into MotoGP and we always seem to go the Superbike route unfortunately. I had to do it and it made me worse off.

You really think that?

Yes because being born and bred on a Grand Prix bike seems to be much easier in terms of getting here and the team managers take you from the same championship. I really hope a Brit can get some continuity in this championship and I hope I'm the one to do that.





You don't resent being part of the Brit 'chain' then?

No because if I didn't think I deserved to be here – or wanted to be here - then I wouldn't be. The last time a Brit was on the podium was Jeremy McWilliams when Valentino won his first 500cc race! It is OK saying 125 and Moto2 guys are making the podium but, mate, I can tell you it is nothing compared to this class. People like Marquez, Vinales and Bradl maybe will be strong when they get here but I don't believe they are any better than what I am and if I thought differently there would be no point in turning up to the grid. At the same time you have to be realistic and know that you won't win on a privateer package.

How did you deal with the Simoncelli tragedy? Is it a case of having to block it out?

It is hard not to think about it especially when you are involved in the same race that it happened. At the end of the day this is what we do for our job and I know this will sound a bit bad but I don't think you would have heard anyone saying they were not going to race because of it. It won't change the fact that it will all continue. Nobody wants to see anyone crash at all. Nobody could stop what happened. It was an accident. It was a freak thing.

You've had some of the same emotion through Craig Jones's death at Brands Hatch...

He was my best mate so I have already been there and felt that.

Do you need to be a bit more detached than a 'normal' person because you need to get out there and do it again...?

No...I don't think so. We all race and however it might sound I doubt whether Marco would have been saying 'you need to be cancelling races...'. If there were any issues from what happened in Sepang then we'd all be looking into it. Everyone left that race very shocked and not knowing what to do but we are all back together now and feeling the same emotions.

Do you think some of the negative light Marco had during the season might have made certain people feel a little worse about what happened?

It doesn't matter what was written, he created headlines because he was fast and people didn't like it. It is as simple as that. They didn't like the way he rode because he would never give up. No matter what, if he wanted a position he would get it and we saw that clearly two weeks beforehand in Australia.

I believe he created headlines because he was good. If everybody went like him that then it'd be a fantastic sport to be in. Some of the other riders didn't like it [his style of racing] but what's there not to like? Back in the day that is how they used to race. Marco was the new kid and got criticism for it and for the fact he was about to beat the guys at the front. They didn't like that and think they deserve more respect than he gave, but they don't. If there was another guy racing the way he did now they would still say the same thing but it is because they don't want to be beaten. They felt pressure from it and they made an issue from it. Marco didn't have a problem; he got off his bike and was laughing! Marco was a great rider and like his dad said 'he was a warrior' because I never saw him give up a position very easily at all.

What has been the most startling factor to deal with in MotoGP?

The speed has been so fast this year and in nearly every first free practice the pace has been under the lap record of the previous season. Sometimes I have been competing with guys who are lapping underneath the previous best and at circuits I hadn't seen before; that was difficult! At least I'll know where to go in 2012. I've found that at circuits I know I've ridden slower than at ones I didn't because I've gone at them like I'm on a superbike and back into old habits.

That transition from Superbikes is a funny thing. Only Ben [Spies] has been able to really make an impression in his first year and even then he got away with a lot because of his riding style. There is hardly anyone else who has come over strong on their first go. It might be different when these bikes go to CRT and become a bit more production based, especially for the Brits.

Has your life changed since becoming a Grand Prix rider?

Yeah, I'm bloody knackered all the time! I train really hard and I feel that I am physically fitter than most but I can tell you that one race on those 800s is tougher than two World Superbike races. I'm not exactly sure why but it must be the braking and the g-forces of the corner speed. The GP bikes are hard to ride because they are so stiff. You are forever battling with the bike and that acceleration. They are tough bikes to ride but the faster you go the easier it is: I know that sounds weird! You can be doing a lap a few seconds off the pace and the bike won't feel good but drop a second or two and it feels all right; very strange. I'm learning all the time, especially about the bikes and that's a little bit the problem because you get judged on one year.

What gives you a buzz about MotoGP?

We are at the pinnacle and that's where you aim to be. I've said before that in Superbike I could ride at 85% and be on the podium or win. Sometimes you crash but it doesn't mean you are out of your depth. I gave 100% when I was in Superbike but the difference is that the feeling of giving 120% here means you are lucky to make the top ten. Whether its machinery, riders, experience or track knowledge... that is the way it is. I always want to do the best I can, if that means a win or it means fifth place then I'll be happy.

Before testing the new Yamaha M1 1000 in what would be a prolonged stay at Valencia Crutchlow found his way through tricky damp conditions on the Sunday and survived a punt by Karel Abraham to take fourth position in the very last 800cc MotoGP race. It was the best finish by a Brit in the four-stroke MotoGP era and for the last eleven years...



BRADL GOES MotoGP WITH GERMAN HOPES

After a successful test at Valencia following the final round of the championship, in which he lapped quicker than LCR's previous rider, Toni Elias, on the same bike, the new Moto2 World Champion Stefan Bradl finally sealed his move into MotoGP by signing a two-year deal with the Italian team.

There had been mutterings at the mid-stage of the season that Bradl would make his move up to MotoGP but the German had quashed those rumours by suggesting that he would stay in Moto2 for another year, with his Kiefer Racing team unable to secure the funding to run a prototype RC213V or a suitable CRT option.

After winning the title however, the presence of a German rider in the premier class has

proved too much for both Honda and LCR to turn down, not to mention the series organisers who will have no doubt lent their support to Lucio Cecchinello to bring in the talented 21 year-old (22 next week).

With Bautista having been chosen to replace the late Marco Simoncelli at Gresini, Bradl has shown enough of the kind of consistency and determination throughout 2011 that pleases team bosses.

Hopes are now high that he will be able to adapt quickly to the new class and bike and put German motorcycling back on the map after a fair hiatus since Alex Hofmann called time on his MotoGP career in 2007.



SUZUKI FINALLY BOW OUT

The 'will-they-won't-they' saga for Suzuki finally ended in negative fashion as the Hamamatsu factory officially announced at the end of last week that it was to cease its involvement in the MotoGP World Championships until at least 2014.

Although team boss Paul Denning had been positive about the team's options at the final round in Valencia, Alvaro Bautista's signing for Gresini Honda was the first real suggestion that the deal was seriously on the rocks. Despite this, the team tested with Randy de Puniet at Valencia and it seemed as if there was still grounds for the team to be resurrected. However with progress on a 1000cc bike still stuck in first gear, the plug has been pulled and it is difficult to see how a two-year break will improve their chances of a return to the highest level.

Financial factors back home in Japan, coupled with the global downturn in motorcycle sales have left Suzuki unable to support a struggling MotoGP effort, and they will now turn their attention to the World Superbike championship.

A optimist would suggest perhaps that this is a case of the manufacturer keeping one eye on a return for their engine in some kind of CRT format before becoming involved with a full prototype once more.

Anyhow it is a sad end for a factory who has such a rich history in the World Championships; who advanced 500cc two-stroke technology in the mid-1970's and made its most recent incursions into the Honda-Yamaha dominance with titles in 1993 (Schwartz) and 2000 (Roberts Jr.)



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START OF A TURNING POINT...

By Gavin Emmett

In earlier editions of this blog I've remained staunchly optimistic about the involvement of the CRT machines in MotoGP from 2012.

Whilst many will have looked at the lap times set by the hybrids at the post-race test at Valencia and instantly jumped on the negative bandwagon because of their relative lack of competitiveness, as far as I'm concerned it is important to bear in mind the bigger picture.

As such I was actually warmed by the appearance of a whole host of CRT bikes at Valencia. The turnout in numbers of bikes on track was gratifying, with machines coming out of the woodwork that many people would never even have been able to conjure up in their wildest dreams.

Laglisse, Inmotec and Gapam are names probably not familiar to those outside Spain or Italy, and whilst their projects are still in their infancy they point to a significant increase in interest and desire to become part of MotoGP.

There are also the existing teams who have decided to dip their toe in the waters of CRT, with Gresini confirming it will run one machine, whilst Aspar plans to run a two-man team with Aleix Espargaro gripping the bars of one motorcycle and an-as-yet unconfirmed rider on the other.

Add those names to the other teams who have confirmed they will take part such as Forward Racing with Colin Edwards, Speed Master with Anthony West, Paul Bird Motorsport with James Ellison, BQR with possibly two riders...

Already the grid is looking a lot healthier than this year, even though it seems likely there will be a case of 'two championships in one'.

I was warmed by a whole host of CRT bikes turning out for the test...

The sport has had to reinvent itself somewhere however, and this is just the starting point for the influx of teams and bikes and hopefully a renewed interest in the premier class. Who knows what will happen when fuel and engine restrictions play their part.

The big surprise to me at this point is that nobody has snapped up Randy de Puniet yet. Ok, the Frenchman may have suffered this year, but for my money he is one of the fastest riders out there in MotoGP, and it would be a real boost to the CRT revolution if he were on board one of the new bikes.



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FEATURE

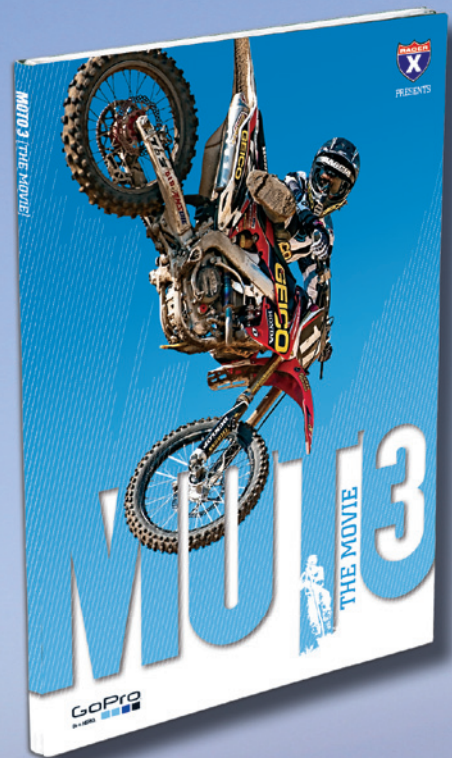
MOTO 3



REVIEW: **MOTO 3**

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Moto 3

With the launch of some perfect eye-candy in 'Moto 3' we've reviewed the film and also asked Director/Producer Taylor Congdon for some words on the process...



Moto 3 takes the viewer on a trip through fast and risky off-road motorcycle riding and racing: the motives, pain, gain, justification and explanation of the addiction. It covers MX, Enduro, Extreme enduro, social 'blasts' and exploration across several continents.

I've not seen Moto1 or 2 and made no effort to track down the features in an effort to review this production on its own merit and I found it to be close to a defining statement of why people pull on a helmet and goggles.

As with many modern 'extreme' based films it looks sumptuous. There is substance here but the filmmakers do not hesitate to show off for our benefit and that alone is a hefty reason to find 10 euros (8 pounds), a large screen TV and an hour of your time.

It opens at Justin Barcia's newly built 'compound' in Florida and if the layout itself, made by Dream Traxx, is a thing of wonder then the images captured of the Geico Honda rider throwing his machine around the obstacles is breath-taking. It might be a very specific and targeted way to begin (this is not a motocross film and not everyone will be fans of the 19 year old even if he does come across very well) but when it looks this good then it was an easy choice to set the tone and the bar of the production. In fact I'd almost say that 'Moto 3' - although it comes close on many occasions - does not reach the same kind of level and by the time a similar segment on Kevin Windham closes the film there is a sense that you've 'been there and seen it' and better.

The second act with Destry Abbott and Taylor Roberts hitting the ridges, washes and ravines of the Arizona desert is equally astonishing and superbly edited. It is a different way of riding a motorbike and you are permitted an

instant appreciation of how and why these people get their kicks.

GoPro cameras come into their own near the halfway mark and although these images can be found on the web the entire edited section is a novel way to highlight the Lucas Oil AMA Nationals. Views are seen from pit boards, '30 second boards', start gate buttons a champagne bottle and even a jet-wash.

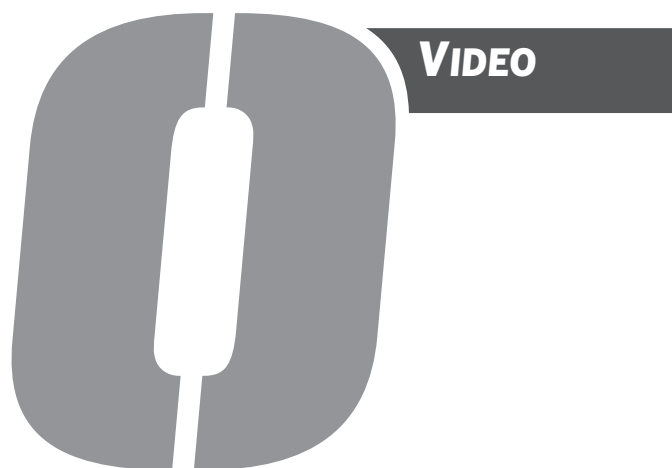
The progression into the Sipes riding facility in Kentucky where the descriptions of the heat lie side by side with musings on their occupation/past-time see the quality notch cranked right up again in 'Moto 3'; the shots of the brothers and friends hitting the narrow parts of their track through woodland beggars belief at times. Ryan Sipes, in a line that is almost scripted, also offers the underlying theme and message of the movie: "Motocross is dirty, hot, sweaty, hard on your body...but man, it's fun and that's what I do, what I am and what I live for."

The film's soul lies with individuals that might not be in the same sporting sphere as the Pro motocrossers but transmit the spiritual essence of off-road motorcycling just as (if not more) effectively.

It is the more organic elements watching Kevin Rookstool, Colton Haaker, Cody Webb and two generations of the Watts family (including 67 year old Norm brilliantly strapping black elastic bands to hold together a knackered of boots) bash trails from the Idaho mountains to Mexico's beaches provide big chunks of the movie for the 'everyman'. Their experiences also highlight the social side of riding as another factor for why it is so enjoyable, as Haaker says: "It is not always the trail but the people you are doing it with."







In contrast there are some parts that don't sit so easily. The motocross Grand Prix focus on the KTM teenagers of Ken Roczen and Jeffrey Herlings is expertly shot (as you'd expect from Mikey Neale) but overall the separate edits feel like a missed opportunity to place both Roczen and Herlings together and analyse why these precocious teenagers are able to do what they do. The clips trade on a viewer's knowledge of who these kids are and the same connection isn't there compared to some of the other narratives. The examination of Endurocross perhaps warrants space in the film but should be buried deep in the second half as the footage is not in the same league as the Barcia/Arizona elements just before it.

The marquee names are here, and the piece on the Monster Energy Kawasaki crew, centred on Ryan Villopoto, Jake Weimer, Tyla Ratray and trainer Aldon Baker (see clip on these pages)

is subject matter for a film in itself. There is constraint around Villopoto as the reigning champion muses on the demands needed to reach his level and you are left curious to see much more about what the Kawasaki racer does away from the track to be able to operate at the peak that he does. Weimer is also articulate and warrants some more screen time.

'Moto 3' looks so good and covers several themes that you want it to be seminal. It will more than satisfy MX and Enduro fans but part of you will want it to carry 'the message' wider. There is a little bit of repetition (poor Windham merits a feature but it feels tacked on the end) but it provides a general appreciation of riding as a completely addictive and encompassing pastime. In short this is as good as it gets and the ultimate compliment you can pay 'Moto 3' is that you want to get out riding as soon as the credits roll.

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Some of the camera perspective and captures you obtained for the film are incredible. What kind of resources did you have at your disposal?

Taylor Congdon: We try to do whatever we can to move the cameras and get unique perspectives; lifts, helicopters, cable systems, sliders, dollies, etc. On MOTO 3 we used the Dactylcam Cable Camera system a lot. Basically it's a 1,500ft cable supporting a remote controlled car with a mounted camera. We also like to do a lot of Point-Of-View angles. GoPro is a big supporter of ours and their new cameras are 'unreal' with picture quality.

What was the time scale? In terms of weeks to shoot and edit..?

TC: We made MOTO 3 in 6 months. The first two MOTO movies took a year each to make but pulled the trigger late on starting MOTO 3 and I decided to put my head down and get it done for the holidays.

Did the decision on what types of disciplines to include depend a little on the footage you had or was the structure a planned direction?

TC: The structure of the movies and all our shoots are pretty well planned out. When I made the first MOTO, my goal was to bring back the old Terrafirma Fox Racing movies. I grew up watching those and thought it was so cool to see one that showcased all the different disciplines of riding and racing dirt bikes.

For me the most interesting parts of the film are the most 'organic'; the adventures in the desert, the Watts', Sipes ranch, Webb, Colton and Rookstool just 'getting out there'.

TC: I totally agree! In MOTO 3 I wanted to work a lot more with the EnduroCross riders. I think what Cody Webb, Colton Haaker and the boys are doing is so impressive. Its one thing to see a trials bike go up a massive rock or drop off a wall, its another to see it done on a MX bike. One of my favorite segments was going to Baja

TAYLOR CONGDON

Mexico with those guys, the terrain down there is endless.

Did you ever think of going more general? Of capturing an essence of what riding is about?

TC: We try to touch on the soulful side of the sport but without going too over the top. The MOTO movies are more action sports segment films. In the future it would be fun to make a movie more story driven but if we do it, its got to be done right, with a significant budget and time.

It must have been hard to edit the Villopoto footage...there is a separate film there waiting to be based around this guy...

TC: RV's segment was cool to shoot. He's a fun guy to hang out with. Unfortunately when you work with riders of his calibre and dedication you don't really get much time with them. We shot his section in two very rushed days.

For people who saw Moto1 and 2, what is there in Moto3 to entice, and do you have to have seen the first two to grasp any of the narrative in this version?

TC: No, each film is quite different from the next. Each has similar structure but is meant to showcase the current state of the sport. We try to only work with the biggest and best riders at the time, both in the States and in Europe.

The difference between the original MOTO The Movie and MOTO 3 is the technology of the cameras and the riders and the bikes are faster. There's just so much to our sport that I think we're just scratching the surface in showing where and what dirt bikes can do.

In what ways can this go for 'Moto 4'? What new things can be explored?

We don't have plans yet for MOTO 4 but that's a simple question to answer if we do... new riders, more exotic locations, and bigger, faster tracks....



KTM UNVEIL FREERIDE E AT MILAN EICMA

The EICMA International Motorcycle Exhibition at Milan is a behemoth of a two-wheeled 'gathering', covering five halls and a vast exterior display/race arena. Before the majority of the 500,000 attendees of the 2011 edition two weeks ago were able to cast an eye over the slew of new machinery, products, accessories and any equipment even vaguely connected to motorcycling, (more than 1400 brands in total) press and trade had their turn at checking out some of the eye-catching, interactive and costly presentation display stands.

Milan was the opportunity for many companies to unveil their latest products to try and buck the downward spiral that we are compelled to read about each day in national media outlets. Ducati arguably stole the headlines with their fetching 1199 Paginale.

Venturing into off-road and for me personally the highlights were the new Ossa Enduro and KTM Freeride E; that we've been hearing drips and drabs about for over a year. The Ossa, in both 300 and 250cc incarnations and due

in 2012 tricked out with Ohlins suspension, looked stunning and seems a worthy motorcycle with which to re-establish one of Spain's classic old brands.

The Freeride E is an exciting piece of technology. Electric bikes have been around for several years but none have really broken through to reach mainstream consciousness in spite of unrivalled practicality (zero emissions, barely audible).

With KTM's reputation and ability to put the bike 'on the map' this could be the first taste of how electric motorcycling could enter our lives in a major way over the coming years. The first reviews and thoughts will be very interesting to chart through 2012. The Freeride E makes up to 30hp, can be charged at the socket, has fixed transmission and WP suspension, weighs around the same as an MX2 Grand Prix bike (95kg), has both brakes on the bars and is described by KTM as 'a sports-oriented, environmentally friendly bike', the product of three years development. Check out the opposite page for a cool video filmed in Barcelona summarising the concept...



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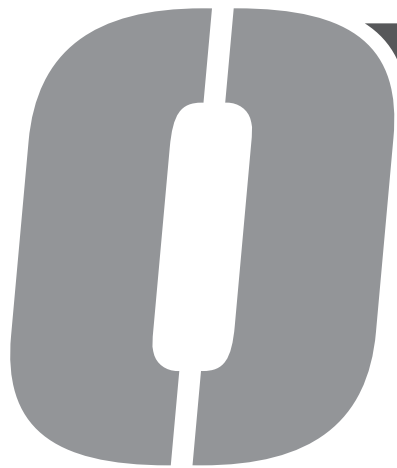
VIDEO





VIDEO

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VIDEO

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SCREEN PLAY...

By Adam Wheeler

The film Moto3 has the honour of being OTOR's first 'film review' and I could only wish we could do more. Hours can be lost flicking through off-road clips on Youtube and websites like Mpora and Vimeo but there is a degree of 'formula' to what you find; a rock music track, a bike being kickstarted, panning shots of a corner being railed, slow-mo etc etc.

The advances/trending of onboard cameras like GoPro has permitted a perspective and an accessibility that is almost impossible in any other motorsport. We've seen inventive onboards for years in F1 (indeed John Frankenheimer's 1966 feature film 'Grand Prix' won three Academy Awards for Effects, Sound and Editing) and MotoGP but GoPro has sucked in viewers to motocross and off-road in ways that entertain and thrill as much as inform.

In my opinion music is also everything for a decent clip; that's why this seminal short from Mikey Neale ranks as one of the best motocross edits I've seen. Talk about 'nail-hitting' for narrative, emotion and visual. Click **here**.

So while videos and season reviews are plentiful, there is little in the way of quality documentary material and this belief can be supported by the still constant reference to 'On Any Sunday' for its importance to motorcycling, a hefty forty years on but in part due to a cult status. Features films are normally pretty dire when centred on motorsport as they seem to always stumble at the crux of trying to portray the adrenaline-pumping earth realism of on-track action while asking for a crazy suspension of belief to accept the movie star protagonist in the midst of it all. Feel free to email or Tweet me if you think there are any exceptions!

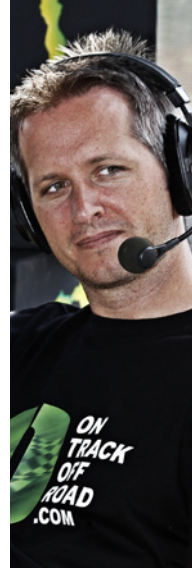
2011 has actually been a good year for those who like to see motorsports in a more factual and dramatic way. 'Senna', TT exploration 'Closer to the Edge' (in 3D no less), 'Fastest' (Ewan McGregor voiced MotoGP sequel), 'Moto 3' and even gripping yet morbid documentaries **like this one** have engaged the imagination. The Christmas lists might be slightly longer for a few of us this year.

By the way if you want to see something completely insane – and not necessarily bike connected – then check out our new 'video highlights' page just opposite.

On another subject I'd like to say a hearty 'welcome' to Steve Matthes, the journo behind the mammoth **www.pulpmx.com** website, podcast extraordinaire and RacerX contributor among other roles.

The Las Vegas resident has lent his thoughts on the lack of AMA SX stars visiting Europe in this issue and will also contribute for the final two OTOR editions still to come in 2011. Hopefully the jovial Canadian will be throwing us some words and opinions to compliment the images and ramblings of Mr Steve Cox for the twenty-five OTORs we have planned for 2012.

Kicking off right away on January 10th with the first of seventeen rounds of the AMA/FIM Supercross series from Anaheim in LA. I'll actually be heading out for the second and third meetings in Phoenix and then back to LA – with photographers Ray Archer and Juan Pablo Acevedo (the brains behind Spain's best MX website www.mx1onboard.com) to ensure we have some cracking American content to seep through the pre-season weeks.



Clement Desalle

Team Rockstar Energy

Suzuki World MX1

PH: Ray Archer

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LOOKING BACK THROUGH THE LENS...

By Adam Wheeler
Photos by Andy Ferguson
Max Zanzani

In the second part of our Monster Energy Yamaha focus the spotlight falls on the two FIM MX1 Motocross World Championship riders David Philippaerts and Steven Frossard. The Italian and Frenchman talk through their top three moments from the 2011 season in which the factory duo claimed three of the fifteen Grands Prix between them...



STEVEN FROSSARD

TOP

Grand Prix of Bulgaria, round 1 of 15, Monster Energy Yamaha debut

Steven: "Bulgaria for the first GP and I think this was the photo that was used for the advert for the Grand Prix of Limburg! This is a strange picture of me because I am not usually that loose and easy on the bike in a race. At first I thought it was a practice shot but then I am using a lot of tear-offs on the goggles so maybe it is from one of the motos. I think Bulgaria was one of my best Grands Prix of the season. The track was really nice and I could push hard."

TOP RIGHT

Grand Prix of France, St Jean D'Angely, round 5 of 15, first MX1 win, first for Yamaha

Steven: "St Jean and my first win. My best souvenir of 2011 and my career so far...all in front of the French public. I had more pressure at this GP because of a good start to the season but I only felt it in the build-up to the race and when I was around the circuit; on the bike all of that was forgotten. The first moto was easy but the second was tougher after a bad start. I had a big blister on my hand afterwards because it was hard work with the braking on the long downhill double jump. It was an unbelievable day for me in terms of emotion. When I went past the chequered flag I didn't cry but the strength of the feeling was similar. It was the same when I heard all the people singing the national anthem on the podium; it was strange to hear that at a Grand Prix."

RIGHT

Grand Prix of Sweden, Uddevalla, round 8 of 15, second victory of season, pictured with Yamaha Motor Europe Racing Manager Laurens KleinKoerkamp – right – and Monster Energy Yamaha Team Owner Michele Rinaldi

Steven: "I have just won in Sweden and I'm really happy because won both motos with two good starts. I don't know why exactly but that was the easiest day of the season. I like Uddevalla as a track and won my first GP there in MX2 in 2010 but it is a difficult place because it is slippery. I have a good relationship with Michele. He is not like a boss, almost family, but most Italians are like this in my experience."







DAVID PHILIPPAERTS

TOP LEFT

Grand Prix of the Netherlands, Valkenswaard, round 2 of 15, first podium of the season

David: "Here I am with the big trophy in Valkenswaard, my first podium of year. I have good memories of the weekend because the track was very difficult this season. It was hard and bumpy and physically challenging, so I was pleased with the result. We had made a good step with the 2011 race bike because the suspension was working very well and I had a positive feeling in the sand; this helped a lot to reach the podium. This was only the second round so I was coming up to 100% race fitness. I like the size of the cup but it is not my favourite trophy. I think the best one is a ceramic pot with a cool design that I have from my win at Loket in the Czech Republic in 2008. It was an important win for me at the time so the trophy is extra special. I keep all the silverware in one special area of the house. I also have helmets there as well as the '08 Yamaha with which I won the MX1 Championship that year."

LEFT

Grand Prix of Brazil at Indaiatuba, round 4 of 15, first victory of the season

David: "Brazil was the best race of the year because of the win but also because the event is so nice. It was hot and a long way to travel but it was worth it for the track, the friendly people and the atmosphere of the GP; the fans really get into it. I was riding really fast that day and attacked the motos in the final laps to make times one second quicker than the others. It was only round four so the season was building up nicely."

TOP

Grand Prix of Portugal, round 6 of 15

David: "Nice photo, and I was able to ride like this in 2011 because I felt very comfortable on the bike. I think the '11 model felt better for acceleration and speed but also in the confidence I could take from the suspension. The team did a fantastic job; when I ask for changes to the bike they work to the maximum to make them happen. As a rider this gives you a lot of belief."



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REGAL TO GO RED AS ALBERTSON CONFIRMED

With the AMA season only seven weeks away and the testing/training phase of riders' schedules firmly in swing it seems one of the highest profile racers still not tied down at the time of going to press is 20 year old Kyle Regal.

The talk in the USA is that Regal is likely to steer a red machine come Anaheim and the strong link is with the new L&Mc Racing Honda team.

Steve Matthes sheds some light: "Kyle's had offers presented to him to race but he's very deliberate in his career moves and wants to latch on as the second rider with the Larry Brooks/Jeremy McGrath team. It was thought to be a done deal a while back but the funding for a second rider isn't there as of press time. Brooks is working hard to secure it and if it happens, it most definitely will be Regal in the spot. If it doesn't happen, he'll privateer with Honda with help from his long-time backers."

Former FIM World Championship factory Honda racer Jimmy Albertson has been quietly reasserting himself back home after two tough years in Europe. The popular Oklahoman has finally wrapped a deal for both Supercross and Motocross in the home of the BTPSports.com/Butler Brothers MX/Palmetto Suzuki camp on a RM-Z450.

"I like the move," opines Matthes. "In the USA, riders in 7th spot and beyond don't get a lot of love and a lot of press (and that's another topic all together) so to me, why not get a guy that the media does like and is also drama-free for your team."

"Albertson works hard, has a nice set-up with his buddy Trey Canard, rides pretty well and has never been on the same team for a calendar year," the Canadian continues. "He'll now not have to worry about anything else besides just riding and trying to do better. I think it's a great move for both Jimmy and the team and I'm looking forward to seeing how it works out."

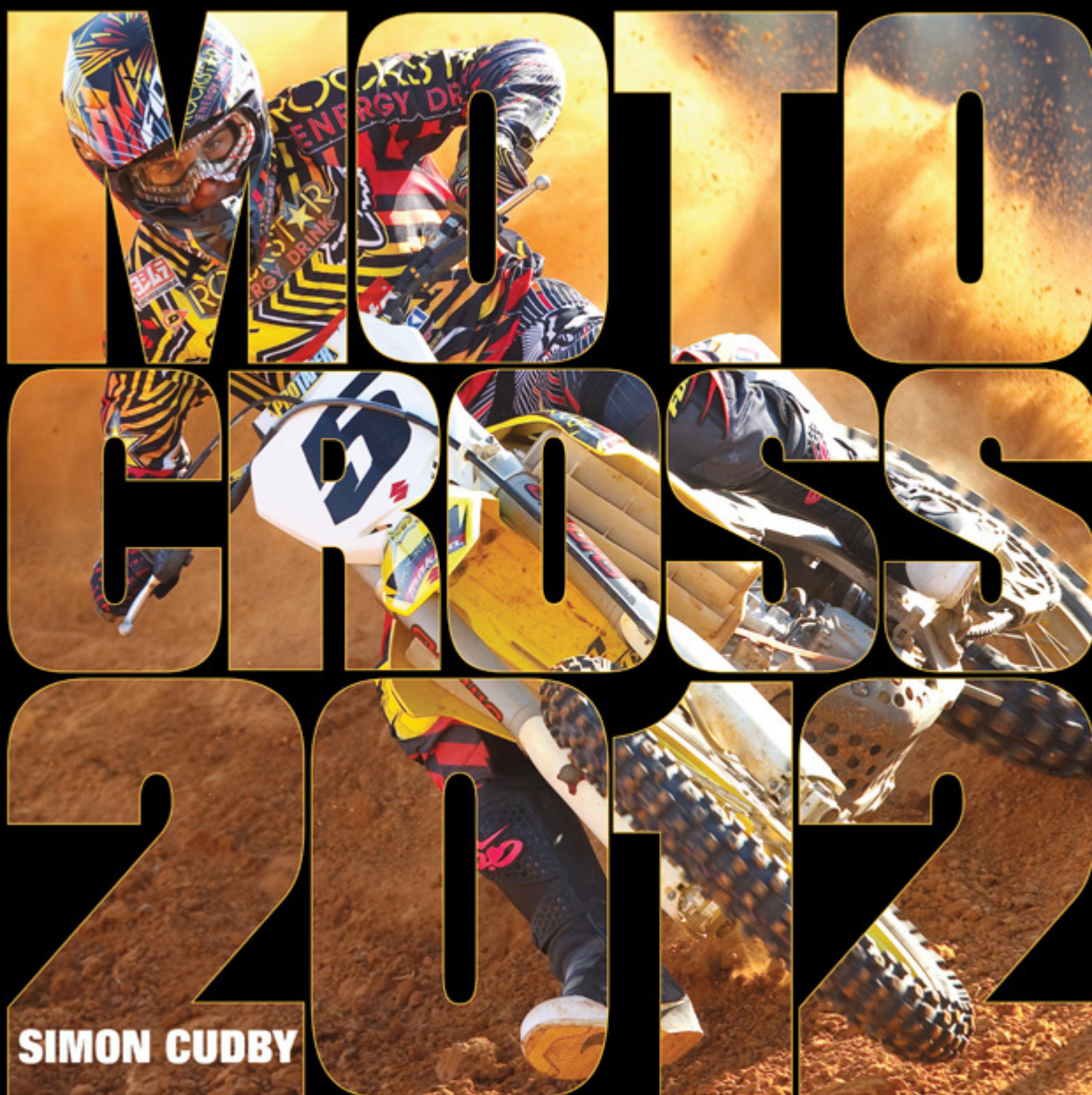


BEST AMA IMAGES OF '11 READY FOR THE WALL

Simon Cudby needs little introduction as one of the best photographers working on the U.S. scene and his 2012 calendar has come off the press and is now ready to order. The project is a collaboration between the Californian-based Brit and Motorbooks International and has been a regular offering for the past five years. Cudby supplies the pics from his supercross and motocross archive and the kind of quality that has seen him installed as RacerX magazine's snapper of choice.

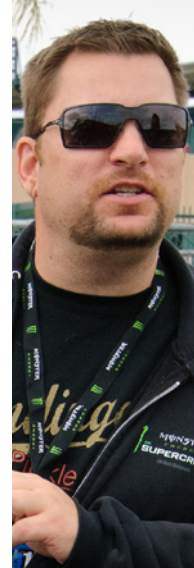
"I usually pick about seven or eight of the top 450 riders and then the other months of the year for the calendar are top 250 riders," he reveals. "MBI has always let me choose who gets in, and I send them several image options for each rider."

"MX photography in its pure form is still a challenge at each race to find shots that 'work'" he adds. Judge for yourself by grabbing a copy [here](#)



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EUROPE SX RUNNING DRY...

By Steve Matthes

Times aren't what they used to be that's for sure. All you have to do is check out your TV on your smartphone, order a pizza on-line or maybe wander into your local electronics store. We all progress, it's a fact and we can't change it.

But there are some things that I just don't like at all about this progress. As far back as 1995 or so, we used to see all the top American and European riders race a circuit of European supercross races and it would be a 'who's who' of riders each and every week at some far flung country. Jeremy McGrath, Stefan Everts, Jeff Emig, Damon Bradshaw, Yves Demaria, Jeff Stanton- you name it and they were there racing for the allure of the first place trophy and, most importantly, thousands of dollars.

It wasn't at all strange to see the top riders in the world go on a barnstorming trip for a month all across Europe but those days are gone now. Sure James Stewart came to Bercy a couple of times but he was the only top-level guy to be there and whopped-up on everyone. Ricky Carmichael did Bercy once, broke his collarbone and was never seen in Europe again save for the Motocross des Nations. Ryan Villopoto? Nope. Ryan Dungey? No way. The only way you're seeing those guys is if you climb a fence in Florida and spy on them.

I miss those days and I'm sure the riders accountants do as well but times change and the advent of big salaries for the riders, more OEM control and a dwindling economy which

forced European SX promoters out of business (these days, it's Geneva, Bercy and Genoa as the big three) are the reason we don't see that anymore.

Jeff Stanton told me that he could make his entire Honda salary in one month racing in the off-season and that's why he did it. Contrast that to when I worked for Tim Ferry as his mechanic and he was pulling down a salary of \$750K from Yamaha and routinely turning down the chance to earn \$40K because it just wasn't worth it to him.

Ferry turned down 40k because it just wasn't worth it to him...

Watching old Bercy SX races on YouTube recently, I was struck by the sort of mini-MXDN's that we were seeing taking place three nights in a row each and every year. Seeing the best of the best duke it out was awesome for a fan and it also didn't mean all that much to a rider if he lost a race. The egos were in check and the entourages were smaller. Nowadays, you're not seeing a Villopoto or a Dungey until Anaheim 1.

I guess times change but that doesn't mean I have to like it. Now excuse me while I program my TV to record a show from my phone while I'm in another country.



BACKPAGE

By Andy Ferguson



ON TRACK OFF ROAD

'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at www.ontrackoffroad.com every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

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